

Crime Prevention: Auto Burglary:

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In 2009, during the holiday season, West Valley City Police responded to and took reports on over 200 vehicle burglaries. The holiday season is a time that many criminals look to vehicle burglaries as a source of getting valuable property quickly and rather easily. Most vehicle burglaries are crimes of opportunity and most of the time involves an easily accessible, and visible, piece of property. Unlike a lot of crimes vehicle burglary can, in a lot of cases, be prevented. Here are some quick tips to make sure that you don't become a victim of vehicle burglary this holiday season;

1. **Don't leave valuables in your car:** During the holiday rush to get shopping done many people go to several stores throughout one shopping day. When this is done make sure that you put bags, purses, and other valuables in the trunk or other none visible place. If a burglar can't see anything of value, the odds are, they will move on to another vehicle where they can.
2. **Don't leave "traces" of valuable items:** Especially popular these days, are vehicle burglars looking for traces of high value electronics in vehicles. These include items such as iPods, GPS units, DVD players, etc. When you get out of your vehicle remove, not only the units themselves, but also docking stations, cords, and even the CD player faceplate when possible. This way, even if you have the electronic with you, you won't have to deal with a broken window or other damage a burglar could do in an effort to locate that high priced item.
3. **Park in busy well lighted areas with lots of foot traffic:** When would be burglars are "casing" an area for possible vehicles to break into they don't want to be seen or look suspicious. If there are people in the area they could witness their crime they will go where they won't be seen. Parking in a well lighted parking spot close to surveillance cameras and entrances can really limit your risk of a burglary.
4. **Always lock your vehicle:** In many cases valuable items are taken from vehicle that were simply left unlocked, either because the owner was only going to be gone for a minute, or because they forgot to lock the vehicle. Each time you park your vehicle make sure to double check that it is locked and each door is secure.
5. **Set an alarm or security system if available:** Although alarms aren't always a deterrent they can greatly increase your odds of your car being noticed if it does become a burglar's target. A loud alarm can "scare" a burglar away and help bystanders notice the suspect. Even if items are taken, vigilant bystanders often obtain a description of the suspect and/or suspect vehicle. This information is critical if property is to be recovered.

If you do become a victim of vehicle burglary you should immediately contact your local police department. In some cases evidence can be obtained, such as fingerprints, by

responding officers enabling them to catch those responsible for the crime. Also, items can be placed on the Nation Crime Information Computer and listed as stolen property. However, in order to list property on this database, it is necessary to have a make, model, and serial number for that item. Without that information items cannot be listed as stolen. Make sure to keep a list of valuable items including makes, model numbers, and serial numbers. A form detailing the information needed can be obtained from the West Valle City Police Department at any time. You never know when you will be the victim and after it happens it's too late.